

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY EUR/P:FJSEIDNER:ST

APPROVED BY EUR/P:FJSEIDNER

EUR/SOV - MR. WILLEMS

S/PRS -MR. TRATTNER (INFORMED)

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: PFOR, UR

SUBJECT:PRESS BRIEFING -- KHARCHENKO CASE

FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM TODAY'S NOON BRIEFING
(AUGUST 4) ON KHARCHENKO CASE:

QUOTE: Q: DO YOU KNOW AS YET WHETHER THE UNITED STATES
HAS REPLIED TO THE SOVIET PROTEST NOTE?

A: I DO KNOW. WE HAVE NOT REPLIED. YOU ARE REFERRING
TO THE KHARCHENKO CASE; WE HAVE NOT REPLIED TO THE
SOVIET NOTE OF JULY 29.

Q: IS THERE A REPLY BEING CONSIDERED, OR WHAT IS THE
SITUATION?

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A: I AM SURE IT IS BEING CONSIDERED.

Q: DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY ABOUT THE CHARGE WHICH HAS ALSO NOW BEEN MADE PUBLICLY THAT THE CIA TRIED TO RECRUIT A SOVIET SECOND SECRETARY AND THEN TRIED TO THREATEN HIM?

A: OUR POLICY IS NOT TO COMMENT ON SUCH ALLEGATIONS. I

WOULD SAY -- NOT SPECIFICALLY ON THAT POINT.

Q: A LITTLE SLOWER, IF YOU WOULD, PLEASE.

A: YES. I WOULD COMMENT, NOT SPECIFICALLY ON THE POINT THAT YOU HAVE RAISED, BUT ON THE QUESTION OF AN ALLEGED THREAT AGAINST MR. KARCHENKO'S LIFE. WE NOTE THAT THE OFFICIAL PROTEST BY THE SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTRY DOES NOT ALLEGE A THREAT AGAINST MR. KARCHENKO, AS IS DONE BY THE SOVIET MAGAZINE, LITERARY GAZETTE.

Q: WHY DO YOU ANSWER THAT PART OF IT? WHY DO YOU ISOLATE AND PICK THAT PART OF IT OUT, AND NOT TAKE ON THE BASIC QUESTION ABOUT WHETHER THE CIA TRIED TO RECRUIT HIM?

A: WE ARE NOT GOING TO GO INTO THE GENERAL SUBJECT, EXCEPT TO MAKE THAT OBSERVATION IN TERMS OF WHAT THE LITERARY GAZETTE HAS CHARGED -- THE PRIME CHARGE BEING A THREAT AGAINST THE LIFE OF MR. KHARCHENKO, AND THE FACT THAT THIS CHARGE WAS NOT MADE IN THE OFFICIAL SOVIET PROTEST NOTE.

Q: DOES THE OFFICIAL PROTEST CHARGE THAT AN EFFORT WAS MADE TO RECRUIT KARCHENKO?

A: I DO NOT KNOW THE REMAINDER OF THE CONTENTS OF THE NOTE.

Q: IT WOULD SEEM TO ME CRUCIAL. YOU ARE MAKING THE POINT, AND IT OBVIOUSLY SERVES YOUR PURPOSES TO MAKE THE POINT, THAT THE NOTE DOES NOT CONTAIN THE MORE LURID UNCLASSIFIED

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CHARGE IN LIT GAZ. LET'S GO TO THE MORE STANDARD CHARGE, THAT THE WHOLE THING IS ABOUT.

A: AS I SAY, I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO ADDRESS THE OTHER CHARGES MADE.

Q: WHY CAN'T YOU ANSWER THAT?

A: WE GENERALLY DO NOT COMMENT ON ALLEGATIONS OF THIS SORT.

Q: WELL, YOU ARE SELECTIVELY REVEALING ASPECTS OF THIS NOTE. CAN YOU TELL US WHETHER THE NOTE CHARGES -- WILL YOU TAKE THIS QUESTION -- DOES THE NOTE CHARGE THAT CIA AGENTS, OR OTHERS, ATTEMPTED TO RECRUIT KARCHENKO IN NEW YORK?

A: I WILL LOOK INTO THAT, YES.

Q: YOU ARE AWARE THAT A CIA SPOKESMAN HAS COMMENTED ON THE CHARGES.

A: I AM AWARE OF THAT FACT THAT HE DID COMMENT, BUT I DO NOT KNOW PRECISELY WHAT HE SAID. WHAT WAS HIS STATEMENT?

Q: I THINK HE SAID THE CHARGES WERE NONSENSE. BUT I JUST WANT TO SAY, AS OZZIE SAYS, BY SELECTIVELY CHOOSING ONE FACET OF THE CHARGE, YOU ARE LEAVING US WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT THERE MIGHT BE SOMETHING TO THE OTHER FACETS.

A: NO, I DO NOT WANT TO LEAVE YOU WITH THAT IMPRESSION AT ALL. I AM MERELY POINTING OUT THE FACT THAT ONE OF THE SALIENT POINTS RAISED IN THE LITERARY GAZETTE ARTICLE WAS OMITTED FROM THE NOTE. THAT IS THE ONLY POINT I AM MAKING ON IT. I DO NOT WANT TO LEAVE YOU WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT ANY OF THE OTHER CHARGES MADE IN THE OFFICIAL PROTEST ARE VALID. AS I SAY, I DO NOT HAVE WHAT THE OTHER CHARGES ARE, BUT I WILL LOOK INTO THAT FOR YOU.

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Q: WELL, YOU SAY THE PROTEST DOES NOT ALLEGE THE THREAT. COULD YOU COMMENT ON THE THREAT?

A: NO, I CANNOT.

Q: FORGETTING WHAT THE NOTE SAYS, WAS THERE SUCH A THREAT?

A: NO, I CANNOT COMMENT ON THAT.

Q: GOING BACK TO THAT FIRST SUBJECT WE TALKED ABOUT: IS IT FAIR TO CONCLUDE, SINCE YOU WON'T SAY THAT THERE WAS NO ATTEMPT -- THAT SINCE YOU WON'T ANSWER THE QUESTION ABOUT WHETHER THERE WAS AN ATTEMPT TO RECRUIT, THAT IN FACT THERE WAS AN ATTEMPT TO RECRUIT?

A: YOU ARE GOING BACK TO THE KHARCHENKO THING NOW?

Q: YES.

A: NO. I AM NOT SAYING THAT AT ALL. I AM GOING TO STAND JUST ON WHAT I SAID; NAMELY, THAT WE DO NOT GIVE DETAILED COMMENT ON ALLEGATIONS OF THAT SORT.

Q: CAN YOU MAKE THE SOVIET NOTE PUBLIC?

A: WE NORMALLY DO NOT MAKE PUBLIC THE CONTENTS OF DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGES.

Q: AND IF WE WERE TO REQUEST IT?

A: I DO NOT KNOW WHAT THE ANSWER TO THAT WOULD BE. BUT IN NORMAL DIPLOMATIC PRACTICE, YOU DO NOT MAKE PUBLIC DIPLOMATIC NOTES; AS I THINK YOU ARE AWARE.

Q: BUT YOU DO MAKE SELECTIVE -- YOU ARE BEING SELECTIVE, AS OZZIE POINTED OUT.

IN OTHER WORDS, YOU HAVE BREACHED YOUR OWN RULES BY NOTING THAT THERE IS AN ALLEGATION AND NOT A DIRECT CHARGE ABOUT --
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A: I WAS ADDRESSING THE FACT THAT THE "LITERARY GAZETTE" HAD CONTAINED A SPECIFIC CHARGE IN THERE -- NAMELY A DEATH THREAT -- WHICH IS A PRETTY SERIOUS THING. I AM MERELY SAYING THAT WAS NOT CONTAINED IN THE SOVIET NOTE.

Q: WHY DID YOU BREACH YOUR OWN RULES ON MAKING THAT DISCLOSURE FROM THE SOVIET NOTE?

A: IT IS NOT A QUESTION OF BREACHING THE RULES. WE ARE NOT GOING TO MAKE PUBLIC THE TEXT OF A DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGE. IT IS NOT DONE.

Q: ARE YOU SUGGESTING THAT. I WAS ASKED THAT QUESTION PREVIOUSLY, AND I AM NOT SUGGESTING THAT AT ALL.

IT IS QUITE CLEAR, WHAT I SAID. UNQUOTE

FOLLOWING Q&A WAS POSTED SUBSEQUENT TO THE BRIEFING:

Q: DOES THE SOVIET NOTE CHARGE THAT THE CIA, OR OTHER

U.S. GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, TRIED TO RECRUIT KHARCHENKO AS
A SPY?

A: THE NOTE CHARGES CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS, PURPORTING TO
BE INTELLIGENCE AGENTS, THREATENED TO DAMAGE KHARCHENKO'S
CAREER IF HE DID NOT "COOPERATE" WITH THEM. HABIB

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